

THE QUALITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICES IN THE LOGISTICS ACTIVITY OF HOTELS

ȘERBULESCU MANUELA-MARIA¹, CONSTANTINESCU SIMONA CRISTINA*¹

¹*University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara,
Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania*

*Corresponding author's e-mail: simona_constantinescu@usvt.ro

***Abstract:** Customers consider service quality as an important choice criterion. The quality perceived by the customer is the concept that summarizes the subjective and objective characteristics of the service. From the definition given by Philip Crosby "Quality is compliance with needs", it follows that, in order to achieve a level of quality, the specific needs of the consumer segment, to which the service is intended, must first be established and then the entire activity is subordinated to achieving this goal. We aimed to evaluate the satisfaction of a hotel's customers regarding the quality of the transport services offered by it, with reference to the role and importance of supporting logistics in the entire tourist activity.*

***Key words:** transport services, logistic activity, customer, satisfaction, tourism activity*

INTRODUCTION

Logistics represents a field of activity that experienced a strong evolution after the Second World War and especially in the last three decades in terms of its role and forms of development in the economy [6,10,12,14]. The term "logistics" was first used in the military field. The concept evolved from the military forces' need to supply themselves during wars. Thus, this relatively new term defines a very old practice. In Ancient Greece, Rome or the Byzantine Empire, there were soldiers called "Logistikas". They were responsible for financial and supply issues [1,4,11,15,16].

Logistics exerts a certain influence on:

- the transport sector - the development of logistics generates profound changes and restructuring in the different actors in the field of transport that can modify their policies and principles of managing their activities;

- regional development - companies are attracted to settle in regions with a solid logistics infrastructure, contributing to their economic momentum and development;

- economic policies - taking into account the growing role of logistics leads the state and local communities to intensify their interventions to improve transport networks to help a disadvantaged region, to implement a transport policy, to guide changes in the transport sector, etc.

- to the scientific and technical environment - its scope includes both the creation and the transmission of the information necessary to optimize the flow management. The development of logistics is linked to that of new information and communication technologies. Logistics is an element of the scientific and technical policy of industrialized countries. Logistics analysis favors the generalization of modern production methods - automation, robotization, etc. [2,7,9,11]

Logistics services include a set of various activities. Of these, transport has a significant weight both in terms of presence and especially in terms of costs. A company's options regarding transport are numerous, but different in terms of implications: to have its own means of transport, to rent, to resort to specialized companies, to choose a certain mode of transport, etc. All this must be analyzed in a specific context, template solutions cannot be given in advance [3,4,5,8,13].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research as direct as possible to customers is a very useful method of knowing the evolution of customer expectations regarding their level of service as well as the services provided by the competition. In addition to the traditional resource, information constitutes a distinct type of resource, with essential importance in the modern enterprise, and marketing research must be as effective, accurate and relevant as possible, determining superior results. To carry out this research, we resorted to the questionnaire method, a questionnaire addressed to the customers of the hotel under study. The self-completion survey was used as the questionnaire method, sent in person, using closed questions, which can be processed quickly and easily and being able to code the answer options, which positively influences the duration and difficulty in processing the answers. Initially, a pre-test of the questionnaire was made on 3 hotel customers in order to verify the clarity of the questions asked, the order in which these questions are asked, as well as the understanding of the scoring scales and the instructions given. Later, the questionnaire was applied to 50 people, clients in the hotel, in May 2023, and the data obtained was entered into a database that we created in Excel.

The questionnaire was made up of 25 questions, the first being questions of a general nature (sex, age, background, respondent's education), the rest of the questions referring strictly to the car fleet. In this paper, we have referred strictly to the questions that seemed relevant to our study.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The hotel has a small fleet consisting of 2 minibuses, a coach, a car for transporting various goods and three limousines. We would like to mention that the vehicles provided by the hotel were used by clients either in personal interests, referring to vehicles or for transportation to/from the airport, tours for larger or smaller groups, depending on the size.

The hotel customers who answered the questions of our survey are predominantly highly educated customers, 76%, 52% respectively have university education and 24% have postgraduate education and only a percentage of 24% fall into the category of those with high school education.



Figure 1. The level of training of the respondent

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The existence of a car park inside the hotel, a way to serve the needs of customers for certain trips, is a factor of great importance, 77% of them considering this very important, 12% that it is important and only 11% saying that this it is not important at all, travel can be done either with certain means of public transport or with personal cars, for those who use this means of travel.

The high percentage of those who consider it necessary to have the hotel's own means of travel can also be attributed to the fact that most of those who use the services of the hotel chosen for research are people traveling for business purposes (49%) or combining business with pleasure (21%), calling for air transport in the first place, followed by rail, and realizing the need for the hotel to have a mini car park to facilitate the pick-up of its customers from the airport or train station.

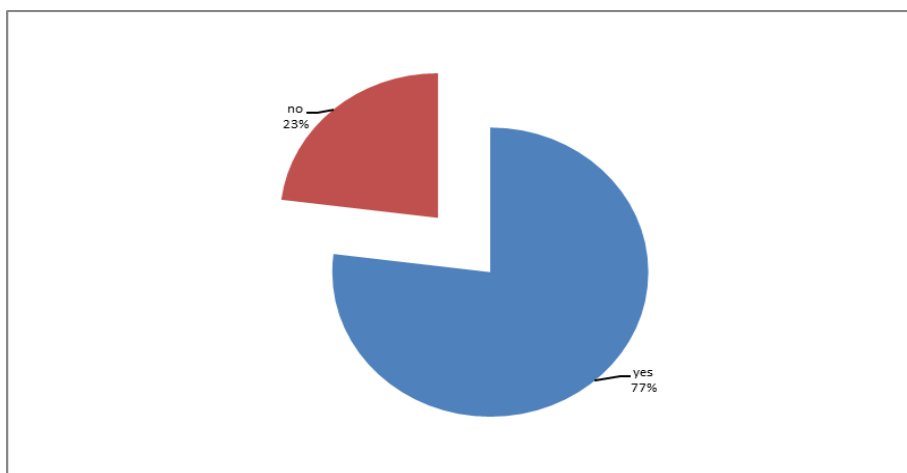


Figure 2. Information about the existence of the car park

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

When asked if they had information about the existence of this car park or received information about this aspect at the time of booking, 77% of those interviewed gave a positive answer to this question, while only 23% answered negatively. The next question that was addressed to the hotel's customers was the one that refers to the use, in one way or another, of the existing vehicles in the car park owned by the hotel.

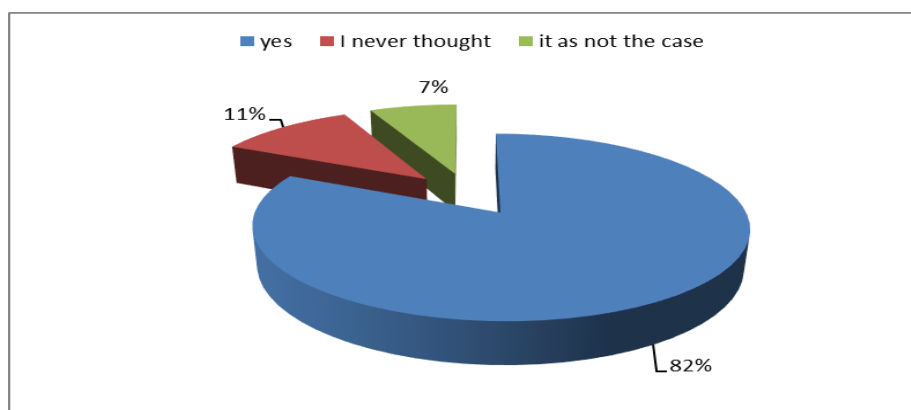


Figure 3. Use of vehicles from the car park owned by the hotel

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

Almost half of those who completed the survey by answering our questions resorted to transportation with the help of one of the minibuses owned by the hotel, a percentage of 49%, 38% of them used a limousine and 13% benefited from transportation by the hotel coach.

Regarding the performance of the vehicles that are in the hotel's equipment, 35% of the customers stated that this performance is very high, 22% consider this performance to be at the high performance level, 13% consider it to be average, 26 % neither poor nor high

and a very small percentage of 4% considers the performance of the vehicles in the hotel's car park to be poor.

It should be noted that the majority of answers to this question came from male respondents, with only 5% of female respondents wanting to answer, specifying that, for them, it is an area beyond them.

Regarding the quality of the vehicles in the hotel car park, customers consider it to be good, 66% declaring themselves very satisfied with this aspect, 12% satisfied, 12% neutral, 10% dissatisfied and no customer stated that they would be very unhappy with said appearance.

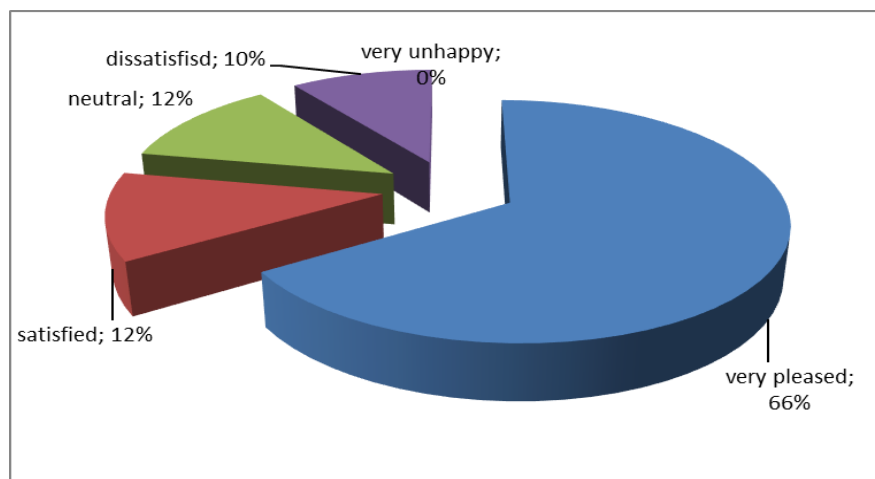


Figure 4. The quality of the equipped vehicles

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

Asked if the brands chosen for the existing vehicles in the hotel car park are representative of both the image of the hotel and the comfort and safety of the customers who use them, 85% of those surveyed gave a positive answer and only 15% gave negative answers .

The communication between the hotel employees and its customers regarding the car fleet, the quality, reliability and performance of the vehicles provided is good, with trends towards very good, according to the average score of 4.4 obtained. Following the marks awarded, the best average score was 4.5, obtained by the information requested by customers regarding the quality of each individual vehicle.

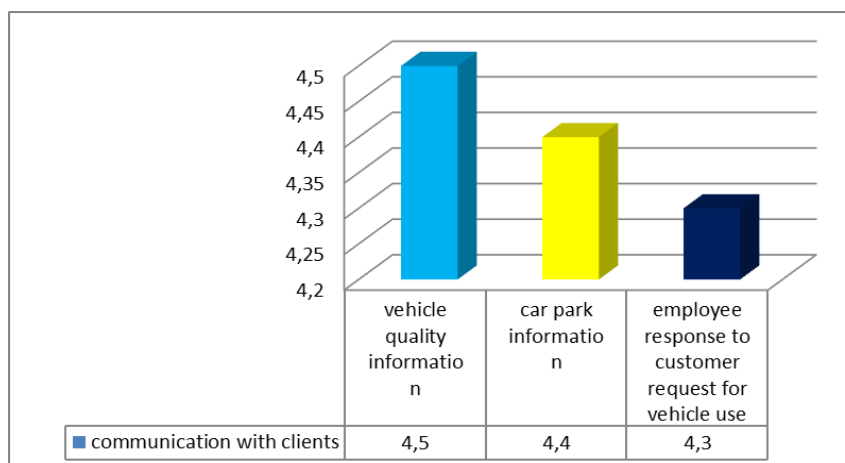


Figure 5. Communication to hotel employees regarding the existing car park

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

The last question addressed to the hotel's customers referred to their opinion vis-à-vis the need for the existence of similar services in other hotels in the country. 87% of them answered that they consider it appropriate to have such services in as many hotels as possible, 10% stated that they do not find such services necessary and 3% preferred not to answer or said that they did not know what to say in related to this aspect.

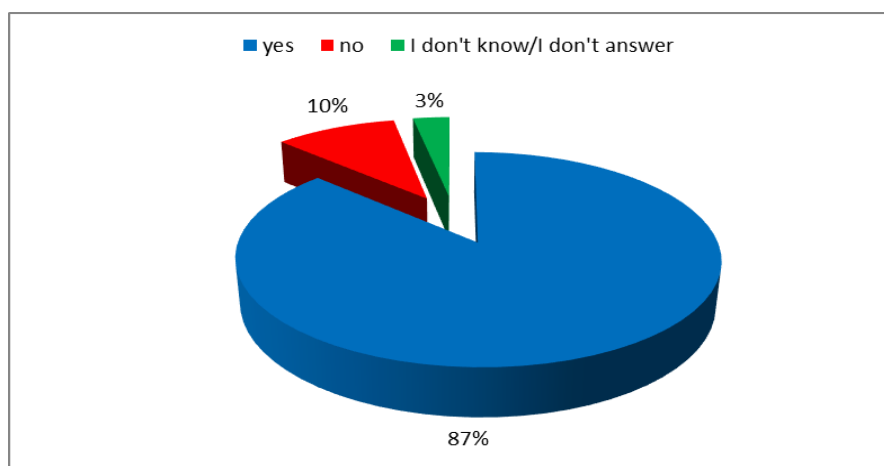


Figure 6. The need for similar services in other hotel

Source: data obtained from the processing of the questionnaire

CONCLUSIONS

The role of transports in the logistics activity, we can say that they represent an extremely important domain of this activity because through them, the transports, it is possible to move goods or people in space, the purpose being the satisfaction of certain needs, either material or spiritual, cultural of society members.

The need that arose in the development, modernization or diversification of transport was determined by the intensification of the production of goods and its expansion, by the increasing circulation of goods and people as well as by the division of labor on an international level.

We aimed to highlight their satisfaction with the quality of the services offered through this fleet as well as the quality of the existing vehicles. The interpretation of the answers received following the application of the questionnaire highlights the satisfaction of the hotel's customers regarding the existence and offering of this service to those who request it. The vehicles made available to customers have performed well in operation, with customers appreciating the reliability of the vehicles, their quality, design and brands chosen to meet the travel needs of hotel guests.

In terms of the communication and collaboration of the hotel staff with the customers regarding the car park, it is extremely important to be aware of the fact that any service activity involves direct contact with customers, people. No matter how good the strategy chosen by the hotel management is, those who will have to implement this strategy are those who work in the hotel, the employees and what the customers will perceive of the services offered to them will lead to success or failure in regarding the chosen strategy.

In order to maintain its competitiveness, the hotel must adopt new methods and techniques, resort to new approaches, the most important of which remains customer orientation. Increasing customer satisfaction, their loyalty on a permanent basis requires

identifying and gathering new information about their wishes and needs in order to respond as objectively as possible and with priority to their needs.

The hotel's customer orientation is the factor that can predict future customer behaviors leading to the development of long-lasting relationships, a fact that offers countless benefits to all parties involved in producing, obtaining and selling high quality services.

REFERENCES

- [1]. **BADDELEY J., FONT X.**, 2011, Barriers to tour operator sustainable supply chain management, *Tourism recreation research*, issue 36, pp. 4
- [2]. **BĂLAN CARMEN**, 2014, *Logistica*, București, editura Uranus
- [3]. **BLYTHE J.**, 2005, *Esențialul in marketing*, Ed. a 2-a, București, editura Rentrop & Straton
- [4]. **CHIROUZE I.**, 2001, *Le marketing: tome: 2, Les choix des moyens de l'action commerciale*, Ed. a 4-a, Paris, editura Chotard et Associes
- [5]. **CHOPRA S., MEINDL P.**, 2001, *Supply chain management: strategy, planning and operation*, Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall
- [6]. **CRISTOPHER M.**, 2002, *Logistics and Supply Chain Management*, Pitman Publishing London
- [7]. **DOUGLAS L., STOCK J.**, 2001, *Strategic Logistics Management*, 3th ed. Homewood, Boston
- [8]. **HOFFMAN K., DOUGLAS B., JOHN E.G.** 2006, *Services marketing: concepts, strategies and Cases*, Mason: Thomson/South-Western
- [9]. **MARTIN SIMONA CRISTINA**, 2014, *Serviciile-o provocare a economiei de piață*, Timișoara, Editura Eurostampa
- [10]. **MICHMAN R.D., SIBLEY S.D.**, 2002, *Marketing channels and strategies*, 2 nd.ed. Columbus: Grid Publishing
- [11]. **PANDA T.K., SAHADEV S.**, 2005, *Sales and distribution management*, Oxford, Oxford University Press
- [12]. **POPOVICI VERONICA, MICU A.**, 2007, *Strategia canalului de distributie*, în *Tribuna Economica*, vol. 18, nr. 32
- [13]. **RISTEA ANA-LUCIA, IOAN-FRANC V.**, 2005, *Economia distributiei: marketing, management, dezvoltare*, Bucuresti, Editura: Expert
- [14]. **ROSENBLOOM B.**, 2003, *Marketing channels: a management view*, Chicago, Dryde Press
- [15]. **STERN L.W., EL-ANSARY A.I.**, 2002, *Marketing channel*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall
- [16]. **VARLEY ROSEMARY, RAFIQ M.**, 2004, *Principles of retail management*, Anglia: algrave